



Wednesday, July 7, 2010

## FACT SHEET

### DOT EFFORTS TO COMBAT DISTRACTED DRIVING

*\*\*An online version of this fact sheet is available at [distraction.gov/dot](http://distraction.gov/dot)\*\**

#### **Distracted Driving Summit**

Last fall, Secretary LaHood held a Distracted Driving Summit in Washington, DC, and brought together law enforcement, researchers, legislators, victims, and other stakeholders to get to the bottom of the problem. Following the summit, President Obama issued an Executive Order banning any and all text messaging by four million federal employees while they're driving government-owned vehicles or on official government business. The DOT also launched a national PSA and a federal website – [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov) – to provide the public with a comprehensive resource for information and ways to get involved.

Distracted Driving Summit Release: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/2009/dot15609.htm>

Website: <http://www.distraction.gov>

#### **FocusDriven**

The Distracted Driving Summit led to the creation of [FocusDriven](http://www.focusdriven.org), the first national non-profit victims' advocacy organization. FocusDriven President Jennifer Smith attended the DOT's summit and spoke about the tragic loss of her mother after a driver talking on his cell phone crashed into her vehicle in 2008. After meeting other relatives of victims at the summit, Jennifer decided to form a non-profit modeled after the successful efforts of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). FocusDriven officially launched just a few months later at DOT headquarters, in January 2010.

Release: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/2010/dot0410.htm>

Website: <http://www.focusdriven.org>

#### **DOT Action**

The DOT is also using its statutory authority to crack down on dangerous behavior behind the wheel. In January, Secretary LaHood banned commercial truck and bus operators from texting behind the wheel and the Department is also currently working on new rules to restrict the use of electronic devices by rail operators and to revoke commercial licenses for school bus drivers convicted of texting while driving.

Release: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/2010/dot1410.htm>

#### **State Laws**

On the state level, the DOT has worked to promote efforts to prohibit distracted driving by releasing sample legislation and encouraging states to adopt tough distraction laws. As of today,

thirty states, the District of Columbia and Guam have enacted texting bans. Five states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands have enacted bans on all handheld devices behind the wheel.

Releases on state laws passed: <http://distraction.gov/for-media/>

Summary of state laws: <http://distraction.gov/state-laws/>

### **Enforcement and Research**

In order to reinforce state laws, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) launched pilot enforcement programs in Hartford, Connecticut and Syracuse, New York in April to test whether increased law enforcement efforts combined with public service announcements can get distracted drivers to put down their cell phones and focus on the road. Dubbed "*Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other,*" the pilot programs, which are similar to previous efforts to curb drunk driving and increase seat belt use among drivers, are the first effort in the country to specifically focus on the effects of increased enforcement and public advertising on reducing distracted driving.

Release: <http://distraction.gov/files/for-media/4.08.10-Demo.pdf>

### **Media**

Secretary LaHood has joined a number of high profile public awareness campaigns, including Oprah's No Phone Zone Day on April 29 in order to get the word out on distracted driving. Recently, he unveiled the winner of a national anti-distracted driving teen PSA contest with the National Organization for Youth Safety (NOYS). Secretary LaHood and American Idol Finalist Jordin Sparks also launched Allstate's "X the Text" campaign in late April in Washington, DC. Release on Oprah show: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/2010/dot8610.htm>

### **Global Effort**

In May, Secretary LaHood joined with Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and senior representatives from the United States and Russia at the United Nations headquarters in New York to launch a global effort to address the growing and deadly epidemic of distracted driving.

Release: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/2010/dot9910.htm>

###